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Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
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S E C R E T TUNIS 1278

DEPARTMENT PASS CAIRO

E. O. 11652: AGDS, DECLAS DEC 31, 1981
TAGS: PINS, XF, TS
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA: DISCUSSION
OF US POSITION ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE EFFORTS.

1. SUMMARY. DURING MY MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA
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ON MARCH 10, I TOOK ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITY TO BRIEFLY REVIEW OUR CURRENT VIEWS ON PEACE EFFORTS IN MIDDLE EAST. PRESIDENT SAID, AS A MAN OF COMPROMISE AND PEACE, HE WELCOMED OUR EFFORTS. HE " KNEW" THAT SADAT WAS WILLING TO BE REASONABLE BUT FELT THAT ISRAELIS ARE BEING TOO HARD- NOSED. END SUMMARY.

2. I SAID THAT US CONSIDERS THAT OUR INTERESTS IN MIDDLE EAST REQUIRE THAT WE CONTINUE AN ACTIVE DIPLOMATIC ROLE IN SEARCH FOR PEACE SETTLEMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH UN SC RESOLUTION 242. USG IS NOT SATISFIED WITH CURRENT SITUATION, DESPITE CONTINUATION OF CEASE FIRE, AND BELIEVES THAT WE MUST CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS WITH A VIEW TO FINDING A PEACE SETTLEMENT. I NOTED THAT PRESIDENT NIXON HAD PUBLICLY ACCORDED HIGH PRIORITY TO SUCH A SETTLEMENT, AS HAD SECRETARY ROGERS.

3. WITH REGARD TO AN EGYPTIAN- ISRAELI SETTLEMENT, I SAID THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO MOVE AHEAD ON TOTAL APPROACH TO OVERALL SETTLEMENT BUT IN OUR JUDGMENT PARTIES NOT PRESENTLY PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE ON FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS OF FINAL SETTLEMENT TERMS WITH DEGREE OF FLEXIBILITY NECESSARY TO OFFER ANY CONCEIVABLE HOPE OF RESOLUTION. THERFORE, ONLY THING ON HORIZON THAT SEEMS LIKELY TO CHANGE THIS SITUATION IS IMPLEMENTATION OF SOME FIRST STEP-- LIKE INTERIM SUEZ CANAL SETTLEMENT-- THAT CREATES MOMENTUM TOWARD PEACE AND CHANGED PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING PROSPECTS FOR FINAL SETTLEMENT. SUCH A FIRST STEP COULD HELP REDUCE SUSPICIONS WHICH PRESENTLY EXIST BETWEEN TWO PARTIES. THUS, IN OUR VIEW, ONCE AN INTERIM AGREEMENT IS CONCLUDED, THERE WOULD BE IRREVERSIBLE MOMENTUM FOR NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TO IMPLEMENTATION OF FINAL PEACE SETTLEMENT.

4. IS SAID THAT USG HAS HAD USEFUL TALKS WITH HAFEZ ISMAIL AND KING HUSSEIN IN WASHINGTON AND WE BELIEVE THAT THIS HAS CLEARED AIR SOMEWHAT. IN CASE OF ISMAIL, RESULT HAD BEEN SLIGHT IMPROVEMENT IN USG- EGYPTIAN RELATIONSHIP. WHILE OUR FOCUS HAS BEEN ON EGYPTIAN- ISRAELI FRONT, I SAID I PERSONALLY FELT-- NOT FOR ATTRIBUTION-- THAT EVENTUAL POSSIBILITY EXISTED OF SIMULTANEOUS PEACE INITIATIVES ON JORDAN- ISRAELI AND EGYPTIAN- ISRAELI FRONTS.

5. BOURGUIBA SAID THAT HE WELCOMED US PEACE EFFORTS AND HE WANTED PRESIDENT NIXON TO KNOW THAT HE WOULD SUPPORT HIM FULLY IN THIS CONNECTION. AS A MAN OF PEACE AND

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COMPROMISE, HE, BOURGUIBA, BELIEVES THAT BOTH PARTIES,

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ARAB AND ISRAELI, MUST COMPROMISE. HE SAID THAT DURING SADAT' S VISIT TO TUNISIA LAST YEAR HE HAD EMPHASIZED POINT TO SADAT THAT ONLY WAY EGYPT CAN ASSURE ITS OWN SECURITY IS TO MAKE PEACE WITH ITS NORTHERN NEIGHBOR. AT SAME TIME, BOURGUIBA EXPRESSED VIEW TO ME THAT SADAT HAS ALREADY BEEN FORTHCOMING RE A COMPROMISE SOLUTION. HE CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO GIVE UP TERRITORY. IT IS ISRAELIS WHO ARE STUMBLING BLOCK.
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NOTE BY OC/ T: NOT PASSED CAIRO

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